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REHABILITATION OF PLYMOUTH ROCK PORTICO SET TO BEGIN IN EARLY 2008

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) plans to begin rehabilitating the Plymouth Rock Portico in early 2008 with \$680,000 that the Patrick administration has made available to preserve and protect this valuable historic structure.

Work on the Portico, built in 1921 in honor of the 300th anniversary of the Pilgrim's arrival in Plymouth, will involve a total roof replacement, masonry cleaning and repair, rust removal from the internal steel frame, repair and replacement of damaged terra cotta vault tiles, and an upgrading of the electrical system. Also, a cutting-edge cathodic protection system (which halts rust through the application of a safe and mild electrical current) will be installed in the Portico to ensure protection against any future deterioration. There will be no design alterations to the Portico.

During the construction, Plymouth Rock itself will be encased in a heavy-duty plywood box for protection.

"We are very pleased to be able to restore and rehabilitate this icon of American history," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "The significance of Plymouth Rock and its protective Portico for the citizens of this country – and indeed for people from around the world – cannot be overestimated."

With nearly 1 million visitors from around the world every year, Pilgrim Memorial State Park is one of the most visited and cherished sites in the Commonwealth, if not the nation. When the upcoming rehabilitation is complete, DCR will have invested nearly \$1 million in the park during 2007 and 2008 in a series of projects developed in collaboration with the Town of Plymouth. The rehabilitation of the Plymouth Rock Portico marks the culmination of these efforts.

"The Portico over Plymouth Rock has long been in need of significant repair," said Senate President Therese Murray. "It is exciting to see a plan of action that will restore the Portico to a structure that is safe and worthy of surrounding one of the symbols of our nation."

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DCR has developed a broad approach to improving the visitor's experience at the park by combining enhanced interpretive materials, landscape improvements, and infrastructure upgrades with historic preservation. The upcoming rehabilitation will include public safety improvements such as replacing the deteriorated stair railing on Coles Hill, across from the Portico.

The Portico was designed by the famous architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White, who also designed the Boston Public Library as well as Penn Station and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. As were many significant buildings across the country at the time, the Portico was built in the Neo-Classical revival style, which suggested permanence, stability, and strength. In 1970, Plymouth Rock and the Portico were listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Boston firm of Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype is the project architect and has extensive experience with historic structures, including work on St. Stephens Church in Boston and the Vanderbilt Mansion and Franklin Delano Roosevelt National Historic Sites in New York state.

DCR expects to award a contract for the upcoming rehabilitation project in mid-December. Construction is scheduled for March 1-May 31, during which time the Portico will be closed to the public and interpretive displays explaining the rehabilitation work will be installed.

This year, \$133,000 in work was completed in the park in preparation for the 2008 reconstruction. That work included testing and design, creation and installation of an interpretive kiosk, landscape improvements, and restroom painting. Also, an additional \$445,515 was spent to rehabilitate Frazier State Pier in Pilgrim Memorial State Park, where the Mayflower II is docked.

"Plymouth Rock and the Portico are symbols for the entire world of where this great nation began," said state Representative Vinny deMacedo. "It is important that when people come to see these symbols of freedom and the American dream, that they be in good repair."

Said state Representative Thomas J. Calter, "The residents of Plymouth will be delighted to see this work begin. We treasure this national symbol of our nation's beginning, and are proud to be the guardians of it in our community."

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